

Palestine Perfins and Non-Perfins

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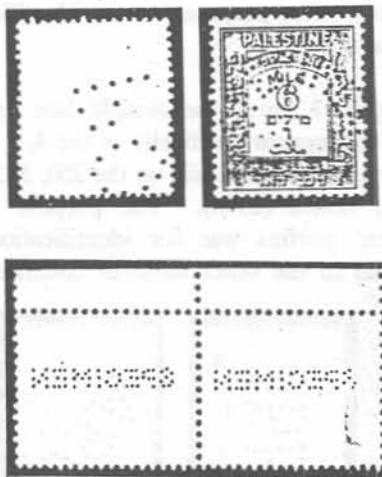
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"Perfin" is an acronym composed of the first four letters of the word "Perforated" and the first two letters of the word "Initial". For convenience the letter "S" is added making the word "Perfins" as it is usually found in the plural.

In philately, the term is used for one or a series of punched out holes on stamps not involving the outer perforations. Such stamps are variously termed "Branded Stamps", "Punchies", "Punch Perforated", "Punctured" and "Spifs" (the last an acronym for Stamps Perforated with Initials of Forms and Societies of Stamps Perforated for Insurance against Fraud).

There are two major uses for perfins. The first use is to indicate a variety of Postal Administration usages. Such devices have been used on stamps as far back as 1854 when single holes were used on the stamps of Western Australia to indicate "official" postage stamps. In 1882, stamps of British Guinea

were perforated "specimen" as a precaution against fraud on its revenue stamps by forgery. Beginning in 1888, issues of Tunisia were perforated with the letter "T" signifying "postage due". In the following year 1889, Spain used the single perforation hole to designate that the stamps had been "telegraphically" used. In 1917, Argentina perforated holes on stamps forming part of the word "Inutilizado" signifying that the stamps had been canceled by the perforations in payment of postage on the bulk mailing of newspapers.



Figures 1, 2, and 3
Top left to right and bottom

To this list must be added the "PG" perfin found on the 1921 issue of Palestine. This stands for Palestine Government. The major official use of the "specimen" perfin was by many countries of the world at the behest of the Universal Postal Union (UPU) to be distributed to other member countries as examples of their postage stamps for identification purposes.

The second major use of perfins was for private application, but with official sanction, as a protection against pilferage. This was well before the use of postage meters in popular use today as a guard against the stealing of stamps. Such use was first authorized in Great Britain in 1869 and later in the United States in 1908. Such private perforations are to be found on the stamps of well over 100 countries.

During the Palestine Mandate, both types of perfins were in use. The first was authorized for private usage. The Palestine perfins are listed here.

(1) Figure 1 shows the "PG" perfin which stands for Palestine Government. This perfin is extremely rare and only one copy has been reported in the literature. It is found on the 2 millimenes stamp of the London I Issue released in 1921. It is not clear what the intent was of the Postal Administration in introducing this perfin. Whether it was to be used for "Official" postage or as a design against the theft of its stamps at its own agencies is not known. For technical reasons relating to the means of applying the perforations this perfin was not put into general use.

(2) Figure 2 shows the arc "specimen" perfin found only on the 6 mil value of the PD III Issue released in 1933. Other values of this set were overprinted "specimen". The purpose was for identification as described above.

(3) Figure 3 shows the straight line "specimen" perfin. This appears vertically on the 4, 7, 8, 13, 15 mil values and horizontally on the 250, 500 mil and 1 pound values (1942). The purpose of these "specimen" perfins was for identification to be distributed to the other member countries of the UPU.



Figures 4 and 5, Left to right

(4) Figure 4 shows the "KKL" perfin. These are the initials of the Hebrew words Keren Kayamet

L'Isreal (Jewish National Fund). They are known in four positions: correct upright, inverted upright, turned right to left upright and inverted. These are known on several values of both the London II and Pictorial Issues. These were authorized by the government, clearly for anti-theft purposes.

(5) Figure 5 shows the "APC" perfin. These are the initials of the Anglo Palestine Company. They are found on the London I Issue and on many values of the London II and Pictorial Issues in eight different positions. These were government authorized for anti-theft purposes.

A full listing of the "KKL" and "APC" perfins may be found in the Bale Palestine catalogue. So much for the reported Palestine Perfins!

While this full discussion has not been previously covered in the Holy Land literature, in itself, it would not contain the unreported material required for a separate article on this subject. Recently at a meeting of the Palestine Study Group of the Central New Jersey Chapter of The Society of Israel Philatelists (SIP), one of the newer members brought in a group of stamps (Figure 6) which contained perfin (?) like perforations. These stamps were all 7 mil pictorials with both the rose and violet colors. None of the more experienced members could offer and explanation. However, on reflection, one of our group remembered seeing a 1928 bank check (Figure 7) with identical perfin (?) like perforations. Closer examination showed that the perfin (?) like perforations in Figure 6 were part of a two-line machine punch with the word "PAID" and a "DATE" below. This was obviously applied by one of the banks, having authorized payment on the check. Of particular interest in Figure 7 is that the machine punch goes through the 7 mil stamp. The stamp was applied in Palestine in payment of the special taxes authorized by the government. It was only coincidental that the machine punch went through the stamp here as it did in all of the stamps shown in Figure 6. Checks have been seen with similar punches but in different sized letters and numbers. In all cases where there was a stamp it has been canceled by a hand stamp as required by authorities. Two other interesting observations are evident. First not all checks seen have a stamp applied in payment of the tax. There must have been some alternative method of paying the tax. Second, some stamps, off paper, have been seen with machine punch letters or numbers different in size from those illustrated in Figure 7.

Continued on page 11

So, do we have another Palestine Perfin? Obviously not!

I would like to thank Dr. Barry Elkins, Earl Kaplan, and Nathan Zankel for lending some of the material shown in this article.

I would like to point out that some of the information discussed in this article was taken from the text *Fundamentals of Philately* by L.N. and M. Williams, a publication of the American Philatelic Society.

Figures 6 and 7 are on page 12.

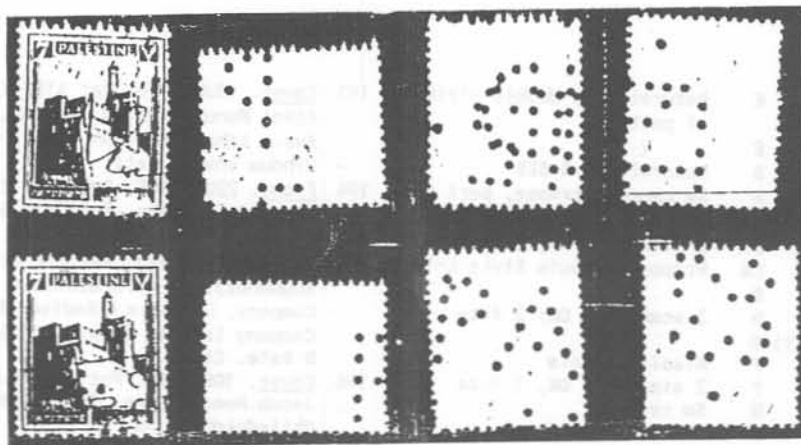


Figure 6.

THIS CHECK IS ISSUED IN PAYMENT OF ITEMS AS PER STATEMENT FOLLOWING. ENDORSEMENT OF PAYEE WILL CONSTITUTE RECEIPT IN FULL.		LAWRENCE T. BERLINER 154 NASSAU STREET New York 192		No. 2595	A
DATE	AMOUNT	PAY TO THE ORDER OF			
		RABBI CHAIM J. LIEB ABERBACH JERUSALEM \$ 5.00			
TOTAL		Five 00/100----- DOLLARS			
DISCOUNT		COLLECTIBLE AT PAR THROUGH THE FEDERAL RESERVE BANK OF NEW YORK			
NET		TO AMERICAN UNION BANK 1-289 EIGHTH AVENUE AT 37TH STREET			

Lawrence T. Berliner

<p>Pay to the order of MICHAEL HARRIS AMERICAN EXCHANGE TRUST CO. THE FIRST NATIONAL BANK OF NEW YORK NEW YORK CITY OCT 1 1928</p>	<p>PAY TO THE ORDER OF THE FIRST NATIONAL BANK OF NEW YORK NEW YORK CITY MICHAEL HARRIS</p>	<p>O/T RECEIVED PAYMENT 1-67 THROUGH FEDERAL RESERVE BANK OF NEW YORK ALL PRIOR ENDORSEMENTS GUARANTEED OCT 1 1928 IRVING BANK COLUMBIA TRUST COMPANY IRVING BANK AND TRUST COMPANY AMERICAN EXCHANGE TRUST COMPANY NEW YORK O/T</p>
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Figure 7. Front and back of check.